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Montana Striving Readers Project 2011-2012

Observation forms and definitions

ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY



Chapter 1

Definitions

This section will give you an overview of the observation definitions for the Montana Striving Readers Project.

Section 1

Learning Environment

SCHOOL

For users who have been granted access to a single school, no selection is required; the iWalkthrough system automatically fills in the appropriate school once a user has logged in. If a user has been granted access to multiple schools, a drop-down menu will appear and the user selects a school before the observation can be completed.

CONTENT AREA

The Content Area category records the content area of the class or lesson being observed. The iWalkthrough reporting system uses this category to disaggregate observation data by subject so that users can review and analyze data within a single content area or compare data across multiple content areas.

GRADE LEVEL

The Grade Level category records the designated grade level of a particular class, or the grade level represented by the majority of students in a class. In some cases, a class will include multiple grade levels. For multiple-level classes, choose Elem Mixed (mixed elementary school classes), MS Mixed (mixed middle school classes), or HS Mixed (mixed high school classes).

CLASS SIZE

The Class Size category records the number of students participating in a class during the observation period.

VISIT TIME

The Visit Time category records whether the observation took place during one distinct time in a class period.

Middle & High School Only

1. First ten minutes
2. Middle
3. Last five minutes

Elementary Only

1. Before lunch
2. After lunch

CLASS CONFIGURATION (Middle & High School Only)

The Class Configuration category records the way in which students are physically grouped in the learning environment.

These selections are:

1. Rows facing front
2. Circle
3. Horseshoe
4. Groups
5. Outside the classroom
6. Other

GROUPING PATTERNS (Elementary Only)

The Grouping Patterns category records the way in which students are physically grouped in the learning environment.

1. Individual

Learning situations in which students are working individually on an assigned task.

2. Partners

Learning situations in which pairs of students are working on an assigned task.

3. Small groups

Learning situations in which the class is divided into groups of three or more students to work on an assigned task at tables, desks, or a designated place in the classroom.

4. Whole group

Learning situations in which the entire class is working on one assigned task with the teacher.

5. Two grouping patterns

Learning situations in which students are organized into two of the first three grouping patterns.

6. Three grouping patterns

Learning situations in which students are organized into all of the first three grouping patterns; some are working individually, some are working in partner groups and some are in groups of three or more.

Section 2

Instructional Practice

TEACHER INTERACTIONS

The Teacher Interactions category records the predominant pedagogical approach being employed by the teacher.

1. Coaching/conferencing

Teachers actively working with individual students or smaller student groups while other students are working either independently or in small groups. This option should also be selected when teachers are conducting whole-class activities in which students are working in small groups or as a whole group, such as when physical- education teachers are “coaching” a group of students or a music teacher is conducting a rehearsal.

2. One-on-One (Elementary Only)

Teachers working one-on-one with a student or students.

3. Monitoring

Teachers who are observing students engaged in individual or group work, but who are not verbally interacting with students.

4. Facilitating discussion

Teachers leading a whole-class discussion in which questions and comments move from student to student. A teacher may or may not be guiding the discussion, but he or she is not interjecting or correcting after every student comment.

5. Posing questions

Teacher-student interactions in which the teacher is posing a series of questions to the whole class to (1) introduce or review a concept, (2) give students practice applying their knowledge or skills, or (3) evaluate a class’s understanding of a concept or lesson.

6. Presenting

Teachers or guest speakers delivering course content to the whole class while students listen or watch. This could take the form of a lecture, demonstration, slide show, film, or even a conversation if the teacher is intentionally delivering course content to the students.

7. Independent teacher work

Teachers engaged in an activity that is not directly related to the lesson in which students are engaged.

STUDENT INTERACTIONS

The Student Interactions category records the predominant learning activity in which the majority of students are engaged.

1. Working in groups

Learning situations in which the class is divided into groups of two or more students to work on an assigned task or engage in small group discussions.

2. Working independently

Learning situations in which students are working independently on an assigned task.

3. Presenting/performing

Learning situations in which individual students or groups of students are performing or presenting material to the whole class.

4. Discussing

Learning situations in which students are involved in a whole-class discussion with questions and comments moving from student to student. A teacher may or may not be guiding the discussion, but he or she is not interjecting or correcting after every student comment.

5. Responding to questions

Learning situations in which students are answering questions posed by the teacher to the whole class to (1) introduce or review a concept, (2) give students practice applying their knowledge or skills, or (3) evaluate a class's understanding of a concept or lesson.

6. Listening/viewing

Learning situations in which students are listening or watching a teacher or guest speaker deliver course content to the whole class. This could take the form of a lecture, demonstration, slide show, film, or even a conversation if the teacher is primarily delivering course content to the students.

7. Down time

Learning situations in which students are not clearly engaged in an assigned task or purposeful learning activity.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

The Student Engagement in Learning category records the number of students who appear to be participating in the learning activity or task, doing what the teacher expects of them, during the observation period represented as a percent.

NOTE: Observers should select 0–50% if the majority of students are socializing or otherwise unengaged in a purposeful learning activity for most of the observation period—even if the teacher appears to have given students permission to socialize or engage in activities unrelated to learning.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY LEVEL

The Bloom's Taxonomy Level category is used to record the level of student cognition and learning taking place in a classroom. (Note: Observers should (1) record the cognitive processes of students, not teachers; (2) record only observable actions, not pedagogical intent; and (3) record only the predominant level of Bloom's Taxonomy observed, not the highest or lowest level.

1. Remembering/understanding

Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory; constructing meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication. Associated terms include clarifying, exemplifying, categorizing, summarizing, inferring, matching, explaining, recognizing, recalling and tagging.

Sample Products: Test, Quiz, Worksheet, Reproduction, Basic Keyword Search, Explanation, Definition, Example, Summary, Collection, Blog

2. Applying

Carrying out a procedure or using learned knowledge in a given situation. Associated terms include executing, implementing, playing a game and reading.

Sample Products: Experiment, Illustration, Demonstration, Interview, Journal, Simulation

3. Analyzing/evaluating

Breaking down material into its constituent parts and determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure and purpose; making judgments based on criteria or standards. Associated terms include testing, critiquing, web linking, differentiating, parsing, and deconstructing.

Sample Products: Survey Database Graph/Chart, Spreadsheet, Outline, Mash-up, Debate, Report, Investigation, Conclusion, Verdict

4. Creating

Putting new elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into new patterns or structures. Associated terms include hypothesizing, designing, constructing and synthesizing.

Sample Products: Story, Poem, Video/Podcast, Multimedia Project, Song, Painting, Sculpture

5. NA/down time

Situations in which the majority of students are socializing or unengaged in an assigned task or purposeful learning activity for the majority of the observation.

LEARNING APPROACHES

The Learning Approaches category lists several pedagogical or classroom characteristics that may or may not be present during an observation period. Learning Approaches is the only category that does not require a single forced-choice selection—observers check all the options that apply.

1. Discrete student tasks

Learning situations in which individual students or groups of students are engaged in multiple (and observably different) tasks intended to achieve the same learning objectives.

2. Student choice

Learning situations in which the observer recognizes that students have been given a choice in the design or execution of a lesson, task, or other learning activity. Selecting an activity partner or choosing among several different themes or options would constitute evidence of student choice.

3. Kinesthetic activity

Any physical or hands-on activity in which students are (1) participating in physical activities or movements or (2) manipulating objects or materials in ways that enhance the learning experience. This option should not be selected when students are writing, typing, or using a calculator.

4. Visual cues

Learning situations in which teachers are using or have provided visual aids to enhance the learning experience and help ensure the comprehension and retention of material. Visual cues may include handouts, diagrams, outlines, learning objectives, written notes, visual presentations, etc.

5. Teacher technology use

Teachers using digital tools to enhance the learning experience for students. (NOTE:digital tools might include computers, handheld electronic devices, interactive whiteboards, probe ware, or graphing calculators, but not VHS/DVD players, TVs, or overhead projectors).

6. Student technology use

Students using digital tools in ways that enhance the learning experience.

7. Video/TV viewing

Learning situations in which students are watching a film, educational video, or animated clip on a television or video-projection screen.

8. Literacy Strategies in use

Learning situations in which specific strategies help students access content through listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Examples include:engaging in oral conversations about a text; rereading a text or reading out loud; reviewing vocabulary; using graphic organizers to enhance understanding; and teaching students specific strategies for editing their writing or presentations.

9. Numeracy strategies in use

Learning situations in which strategies help students understand, use, and represent mathematical concepts and models, manipulate and calculate mathematical equations or reason, and communicate mathematical information. Examples include logical or reasoning activities; constructing, analyzing, and interpreting graphs; modeling; using statistics; doing mathematical operations; and formulating and devising mathematical strategies to solve problems.

10.Assessing formally

Learning situations in which a teacher is collecting information or data on what students know, understand, or can demonstrate about learning standards in the form of a summative assessment, such as a performance, demonstration, test, written task, or rubric. This also could include other assessment tasks such as a quizzes, exit slips, and student self-assessments or peer assessments.

11.Student-directed learning

Learning situations in which students are engaged in open- ended, long-term, or unfamiliar assignments that require them to make decisions about their learning. This includes engaging with an essential question or choosing appropriate materials, resources, processes, and/or products that result in knowledge construction. Completing worksheets, tasks, labs, or group activities that require students to follow step-by-step directions would not be considered student-directed learning.

12.Student work displayed (Middle & High Only)

Learning situations in which student work has been prominently displayed that relates to the subject being taught.

13.Connecting prior learning (Elementary Only)

Learning situations in which the teacher is making an overt reference— either verbally or visually—to a prior lesson for the purposes of enhancing or reinforcing learning within a subject or across subjects.

Section 3

MSRP Observations

STUDENTS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE [Multiple Choice]

The Students Actively Participate category records the percentage of students who are either (1) directing their own learning during the observation period or (2) are directly responding or contributing to the activity—as in the case of a teacher-directed strategy such as Posing Questions or Discussion. Observers record the percentage of the class demonstrating these characteristics. (NOTE: This measure is different from the Student Engagement category, which measures the percentage of students engaged in doing what the teacher is asking of them, and which may not constitute active participation.)

Users are presented with four selection options in the Students Actively Participate category:

1. 0–25%
2. 26–50%
3. 51–75%
4. 76–100%

LITERACY INSTRUCTION ELEMENTS [Multiple Choice] (Elementary Only)

The Literacy Instruction Elements category records the essential, research-based features of an effective curriculum designed to make students proficient readers and writers. Observers select the predominant literacy strategy being employed by the teacher during the observation period.

1. Concepts of print

Literacy instruction that specifically addresses the intentions and conventions of printed text, including the idea that printed text carries a message; that there are conventions of print such as directionality (left to right, top to bottom); that there are differences between letters and words; that there is a distinction between upper and lower case; that text is punctuated; and that books have common characteristics (e.g., they have an author or title, are read front to back, etc.).

2. Phonological awareness

Literacy instruction that addresses the sounds of spoken language, including syllables, phonemes, and onsets and rimes.

3. Phonics/word study

Literacy instruction that addresses the relationship between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language, or that addresses the spelling, pronunciation, meaning, origin, and interrelationship of words.

4. Fluency

Literacy instruction that helps students read letters, words, and/or interconnected texts accurately, quickly, and with proper expression.

5. Vocabulary

Literacy instruction that teaches the meaning of words and/or strategies for learning the meaning of words.

6. Comprehension

Literacy instruction that helps students learn to apply specific reading strategies to more effectively construct meaning from a text.

7. Writing

Literacy instruction that focuses on helping students understand how writing works, its purpose, how to compose text, the graphophonic (i.e., the relationship between the letters and the letter sounds of a language) and mechanical aspects of writing, and allows students to practice writing skills.

8. Not observed

A learning situation in which there are no essential literacy strategies in use.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

The Types of questions category records specific questioning techniques that teachers may or may not be present during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed—No is the default selection. (NOTE:Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Acquisition

Teachers asking questions that verify that students understand the content needed to proceed through the lesson or provide additional support for those that do not.

2. Manipulation

Teachers asking questions that allow students to navigate through basic knowledge and apply it to various situations, determine its usefulness, and learn new information.

3. Generalization

Teachers asking questions that allow students to draw conclusions, make generalizations and surmise what is being learned.

TIERS

The Tiers category refers to the type of targeted instruction that students may or may not be receiving during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed—No is the default selection. (NOTE:Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Tier 1

Students receiving core classroom instruction utilizing scientifically based curriculum and methods to teach critical elements of a subject (reading, math, written expression).

2. Tier 2

Students receiving strategically targeted instruction in addition to core instruction that address specific skills needs of students who are not making sufficient subject progress in Tier 1.

3. Tier 3

Students receiving intensive targeted instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet individual needs for the most at-risk students who have not responded sufficiently to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. Intensive instruction should take place in addition to Tier 1 instruction; however, it may, in a few instances, replace core instruction. This small percentage (1-8%) of students

usually have severe skill difficulties and should be provided within a small group of two to five students.

TECHNOLOGY USAGE

The Technology usage category records specific technology tools that teachers or students may or may not be employing during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed—No is the default selection. (NOTE:Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Student use-enhance learning

Students are engaged in using technology tools that bring the content closer to the learner to practice and develop skills. This may be done through skills-based games on a classroom PC, iPad, or Interactive Whiteboard.

2. Student use-learning challenge

Students are engaged in using technology tools that build understanding at a level suitable for the learner. Through this interaction, students are creating new understanding through writing stories, creating pictures or diagrams, or creating movies.

3. Teacher use-present content

Teacher uses technology tools/digital devices to deliver content such as an interactive whiteboard or a computer paired with an LCD projector.

4. Teacher use-engage in content

Teacher directs students in applying technology to specific problems as a supplemental tool such as watching a virtual experiment, or asking a scientist about something the class wishes to know more about.

5. Teacher use-enhance learning

Teacher directs students in technology tools/digital devices to create content that illustrates new learning or to explore a content idea at a higher level.

TEACHER ACTIONS

The Teacher Actions category records specific techniques that teachers may or may not be present during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed—No is the default selection. (NOTE:Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Active feedback

Teachers providing students with specific encouragement and correction, or teachers asking questions about the learning activity to formatively assess student understanding in ways that facilitate learning.

2. Checking for understanding

Teacher gauges what students understand the content and what additional support the students need by asking about the important ideas and concepts of the lesson. Student answers are used as a roadmap to instructional next steps.

3. Demonstrating skill/activity

Teacher models the skill or activity through a direct instruction model for the students. This is strictly a teacher “I do”.

4. Guided practice

Teacher walks through a skill or activity engaging the students in the process as a team and providing the students with constant feedback. This is a “We do”.

5. Objectives stated

Learning environments in which the purpose and outcomes of a lesson or activity are articulated verbally and/or visually.

6. Reprimanding/disciplining

Learning situations in which the teacher makes negative or punitive comments about student misbehavior, such as failing to meet expectations or failure to display appropriate behavior.

LITERACY FOR STUDENTS (Middle & High Only)

The Literacy for students category records specific literacy activities that students may or may not be engaged in during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed—No is the default selection. (NOTE:Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Reading about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by reading informational text to increase background knowledge and expand understanding of the content.

2. Writing about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by writing about it to expand their understanding.

3. Speaking about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by speaking about it to share and expand their understanding.

4. Listening about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by listening to information to expand their understanding.

5. Using graphic organizers

Students utilize concept maps to visually represent their understanding of the content.

6. Note-taking

Chapter 2

Observation forms

This section will give you an overview of the observation definitions for the Montana Striving Readers Project.

Section 1

Elementary School Form

Section 2

Secondary School Form

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY LEVEL

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5. NA/down time

Situations in which the majority of students are socializing or unengaged in an assigned task or purposeful learning activity for the majority of the observation

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Find Term

CLASS CONFIGURATION

(Middle & High School Only)

The Class Configuration category records the way in which students are physically grouped in the learning environment.

These selections are:

1. Rows facing front
2. Circle
3. Horseshoe
4. Groups
5. Outside the classroom
6. Other

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The Class Size category records the number of students participating in a class during the observation period.

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(Elementary Only)

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4. Whole group

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Learning situations in which students are organized into two of the first three grouping patterns.

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Learning situations in which specific strategies help students access content through listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Examples include: engaging in oral conversations about a text; rereading a text or reading out loud; reviewing vocabulary; using graphic organizers to enhance understanding; and teaching students specific strategies for editing their writing or presentations.

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12. Student work displayed (Middle & High Only)

Learning situations in which student work has been prominently displayed that relates to the subject being taught.

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Learning situations in which the teacher is making an overt reference—either verbally or visually—to a prior lesson for the purposes of enhancing or reinforcing learning within a subject or across subjects.

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1. Reading about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by reading informational text to increase background knowledge and expand understanding of the content.

2. Writing about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by writing about it to expand their understanding.

3. Speaking about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by speaking about it to share and expand their understanding.

4. Listening about content

Students are engaged in subject matter by listening to information to expand their understanding.

5. Using graphic organizers

Students utilize concept maps to visually represent their understanding of the content.

6. Note-taking

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7. Writing

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8. Not observed

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4. Discussing

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Learning situations in which students are listening or watching a teacher or guest speaker deliver course content to the whole class. This could take the form of a lecture, demonstration, slide show, film, or even a conversation if the teacher is primarily delivering course content to the students.

7. Down time

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2. Checking for understanding

Teacher gauges what students understand the content and what additional support the students need by asking about the important ideas and concepts of the lesson. Student answers are used as a roadmap to instructional next steps.

3. Demonstrating skill/activity

Teacher models the skill or activity through a direct instruction model for the students. This is strictly a teacher “I do”.

4. Guided practice

Teacher walks through a skill or activity engaging the students in the process as a team and providing the students with constant feedback. This is a “We do”.

5. Objectives stated

Learning environments in which the purpose and outcomes of a lesson or activity are articulated verbally and/or visually.

6. Reprimanding/disciplining

Learning situations in which the teacher makes negative or punitive comments about student misbehavior, such as failing to meet expectations or failure to display appropriate behavior.

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TEACHER INTERACTIONS

The Teacher Interactions category records the predominant pedagogical approach being employed by the teacher.

1. Coaching/conferencing

Teachers actively working with individual students or smaller student groups while other students are working either independently or in small groups. This option should also be selected when teachers are conducting whole-class activities in which students are working in small groups or as a whole group, such as when physical- education teachers are “coaching” a group of students or a music teacher is conducting a rehearsal.

2. One-on-One (Elementary Only)

Teachers working one-on-one with a student or students.

3. Monitoring

Teachers who are observing students engaged in individual or group work, but who are not verbally interacting with students.

4. Facilitating discussion

Teachers leading a whole-class discussion in which questions and comments move from student to student. A teacher may or may not be guiding the discussion, but he or she is not interjecting or correcting after every student comment.

5. Posing questions

Teacher-student interactions in which the teacher is posing a series of questions to the whole class to (1) introduce or review a concept, (2) give students practice applying their knowledge or skills, or (3) evaluate a class’s understanding of a concept or lesson.

6. Presenting

Teachers or guest speakers delivering course content to the whole class while students listen or watch. This could take the form of a lecture, demonstration, slide show, film, or even a conversation if the teacher is intentionally delivering course content to the students.

7. Independent teacher work

Teachers engaged in an activity that is not directly related to the lesson in which students are engaged.

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TECHNOLOGY USAGE

The Technology usage category records specific technology tools that teachers or students may or may not be employing during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed – No is the default selection. (NOTE: Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Student use-enhance learning

Students are engaged in using technology tools that bring the content closer to the learner to practice and develop skills. This may be done through skills-based games on a classroom PC, iPad, or Interactive Whiteboard.

2. Student use-learning challenge

Students are engaged in using technology tools that build understanding at a level suitable for the learner. Through this interaction, students are creating new understanding through writing stories, creating pictures or diagrams, or creating movies.

3. Teacher use-present content

Teacher uses technology tools/digital devices to deliver content such as an interactive whiteboard or a computer paired with an LCD projector.

4. Teacher use-engage in content

Teacher directs students in applying technology to specific problems as a supplemental tool such as watching a virtual experiment, or asking a scientist about something the class wishes to know more about.

5. Teacher use-enhance learning

Teacher directs students in technology tools/digital devices to create content that illustrates new learning or to explore a content idea at a higher level.

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TIERS

The Tiers category refers to the type of targeted instruction that students may or may not be receiving during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed—No is the default selection. (NOTE:Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Tier 1

Students receiving core classroom instruction utilizing scientifically based curriculum and methods to teach critical elements of a subject (reading, math, written expression).

2. Tier 2

Students receiving strategically targeted instruction in addition to core instruction that address specific skills needs of students who are not making sufficient subject progress in Tier 1.

3. Tier 3

Students receiving intensive targeted instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet individual needs for the most at-risk students who have not responded sufficiently to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. Intensive instruction should take place in addition to Tier 1 instruction; however, it may, in a few instances, replace core instruction. This small percentage (1-8%) of students usually have severe skill difficulties and should be provided within a small group of two to five students.

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TYPES OF QUESTIONS

The Types of questions category records specific questioning techniques that teachers may or may not be present during the observation period. Observers record Yes when a characteristic is observed—No is the default selection. (NOTE:Yes/No categories do not require a forced choice.)

1. Acquisition

Teachers asking questions that verify that students understand the content needed to proceed through the lesson or provide additional support for those that do not.

2. Manipulation

Teachers asking questions that allow students to navigate through basic knowledge and apply it to various situations, determine its usefulness, and learn new information.

3. Generalization

Teachers asking questions that allow students to draw conclusions, make generalizations and surmise what is being learned.

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VISIT TIME

The Visit Time category records whether the observation took place during one distinct time in a class period.

Middle & High School Only

1. First ten minutes
2. Middle
3. Last five minutes

Elementary Only

1. Before lunch
2. After lunch

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